

## *Spatial Justice* 2022 Version

Spatial Justice has emerged in academic discussions over the last two decades as both a relation to and distinctly different from traditions of social justice (Moroni, 2020). Spatial Justice builds from a place of understanding the meaning and significance that is put into space, and the way in which human beings interact with it (Soja, 1996). This groundwork allows for new ways to think about space and impacts associated with predetermined notions and assumptions that underpin interactions between different people and different spaces. Soja's (1996) introduction of Thirdspace creates a vital connection to more recent conversations around space and justice. While it has only more recently been defined as such, spatial justice has its roots in the concept of the Just City, beginning in the 1970s (Moroni, 2020). Despite these more recent developments there remain differing approaches to the concept, most notably those espoused by Peter Marcuse and Edward Soja (Iveson, 2011). The practical approaches put forward by Soja have been further developed within theoretical approaches, specifically in pursuit of academic inquiry (Garvey et al., 2019). Fundamentally, the concept of Spatial Justice seeks encourage the alignment of inclusion with other movements that seek to erase injustices wherever they are found. Soja (2010) suggests that justice has consequential geography, more than physical attributes that can be described and mapped accordingly, instead seeking spatial justice is fundamentally about a struggle over geography. Spatial Justice emphasizing the interconnectedness of different forms of knowledge and the relationship they have on theory development.

### **Key Points from the Literature**

- Maps are the process of creating them is not neutral (Akbari, 2019), rather they are players in systems of power and knowledge (Crampton, 2010).
- Maps and map making have had a significant impact on the construction of race and identity (Crampton, 2010), as well as the way in which these constructs are understood by individuals and societies.
- Queer sexuality functions as a component of space itself, particularly for students moving from highschool to university (Sullivan, 2012). The action of 'coming out' can have a lasting impact on space, and navigation within the university.
- Justice as a concept is integral to notions of space and access, and that attempts to understand the impact of space and its associated legacies need to intersect within efforts aimed at addressing injustice (Moroni, 2020).
- Challenges arise in attempting to apply a metric to the notion of justice, and how this concept remains both contested territory and largely unexplored within the literature. Power is tied to physical spaces, and that different kinds of capital create within a material landscape (Israel & Frenkel, 2018).
- Despite the academic conversations that have preceded and surrounded it, queerness has had a limited impact on the transformation of spaces. Queer space theory and queer more broadly remain contested topics, which places further challenge on the practical incorporation of theory (Vallerand, 2018).
- Spaces perceived to be inclusive may remain filled with oppression and lack safety for queer folks. The notion of lesser visibility highlights how spatial justice connects to

informal gathering places, and how these spaces that play a critical role for those whose identities are invisible and serve to resist further minoritization (Hancock, 2011).

## Recommendations

- Additional opportunities to build on existing research exist to connect spatial epistemology to queer urban history, and bring a greater focus to queer issues through the lens of mapping and cartography (Brown & Knopp, 2008).
- Efforts to bridge the existing gaps between theory and practice should focus on not only minimizing potential harm to the different groups impacted, but also addressing existing harms (Vallerand, 2018).
- Efforts to improve campus culture and climate should be viewed, not only through a lens of space and equity but also through one of safety (Sullivan, 2012).
- Approaches to addressing justice within space need to be thought of beyond their legal definition to avoid incomplete intersections and limited ability to enact meaningful change (Moroni, 2020). Rather, intention must be placed on the different forms of justice and their impact on both concept and conceptions.

## Recommended Readings

- Soja, E. W. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Garvey, Viray, S., Stango, K., Estep, C., & Jaeger, J. (2019). Emergence of Third Spaces: Exploring Trans Students' Campus Climate Perceptions Within Collegiate Environments *Sociology of Education*, 92(3), 229–246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040719839100>
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- Queering Public Space: Exploring the relationship between queer communities and public spaces
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